

## The Big Expense Of Little Counties.

Some County Expense Figures that the Division Agitators will not Dare to Question.

### UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT.

We wrote to the state auditor a few days ago for the amount of tax raised by the 1909 county levy in all the counties of Nebraska whose area is not more than 770 square miles (the size of our largest proposed county) and whose valuation is not less than \$1,275,000 (the valuation of our smallest proposed county.) Mind you, we did not say a part of these counties, we did not select a few counties whose area and valuation came under this head, but ALL of the counties in Nebraska where the area and assessed valuation came within this scope. The result is just as we expected to find it. Every county in Nebraska smaller than our largest proposed new county with a valuation as great or greater than the valuation of our smallest county, cost the tax payers many thousands of dollars more than the proposed quarters in Custer county pay.

It's the same old story of large expense in the little county. Below we give our letter to the Auditor and the list of counties under his certificate and seal.

### The Letter.

Broken Bow, Nebr., Oct. 11, 1909  
Auditor Public Accounts,  
Lincoln, Nebr.

Dear Sir:—Will you please send me a certified statement of the amount raised by the 1909 county levy in all the counties of Nebraska whose area is not more than 770 square miles and the assessed valuation not less than \$1,275,000. I will appreciate an early reply.

### The Reply.

Lincoln, Nebr., October 13, 1909.  
This is to certify that the table hereto attached contains the number of square miles area of the different counties named in said table, and also shows the amounts that will be raised by the county levies for the year 1909, figured on the basis of the assessed valuation and amount of county levies of the different counties, as appears of record in this office.

Witness my hand and seal this 13th day of October, 1909.

Silas R. Barton, Auditor P.A.  
By J. W. Shaban, Deputy.

Co.	Area	Am't.
Adams	574	\$ 35,740.99
Boone	686	60,260.07
Boyd	555	38,972.65
Burt	476	63,227.24
Butler	586	65,141.53
Cass	540	38,087.61
Cedar	725	65,950.18
Clay	586	23,362.60
Colfax	495	49,613.37
Cumming	580	91,914.70
Dakota	264	42,422.07
Dixon	450	50,151.71
Dodge	529	120,458.43
Fillmore	568	47,575.78
Franklin	568	24,596.62
Furnas	715	42,229.63
Gosper	472	21,434.50
Greeley	580	29,494.03
Hall	562	52,648.80
Hamilton	550	47,698.43
Harlan	562	25,624.97
Hitchcock	723	26,802.81
Howard	574	42,690.37
Jefferson	565	50,187.39
Johnson	382	69,296.48
Kearney	503	30,329.71
Madison	576	73,592.39
Merrick	460	28,061.72
Nance	456	32,270.49
Nemaha	497	56,048.46
Nuckolls	572	53,408.93
Otoe	616	130,891.12
Pawnee	437	53,911.29
Phelps	564	29,716.15
Pierce	568	45,441.18
Platte	686	61,106.48
Polk	432	33,956.91
Red Willow	729	47,926.87
Richardson	548	44,865.59
Saline	576	54,005.89
Sarpy	225	57,376.51
Saunders	760	135,752.42
Scotts Bluff	725	22,136.06
Seward	528	51,212.22
Thayer	572	76,254.77
Stanton	431	48,125.15
Sherman	568	32,031.91
Thurston	396	23,647.41
Valley	578	19,156.55
Washington	392	75,497.14
Wayne	441	48,616.13
Webster	578	52,373.99
York	588	57,627.52

Douglas county in which the city of Omaha is located is omitted.

The divisionists who claim that the small county can be run as cheaply to the tax payer as the large one

will have an awful time explaining this matter to the voters of Custer county who see and read this certified list from the state auditor.

Now, let us see how this compares with the amount raised in the proposed new counties of Custer. We do not propose to give the division papers of Custer county a chance to question these figures. We have the above amounts certified to by the state auditor and we have also secured the certificate of the county clerk of Custer county relative to the amount of taxes which the proposed new counties in Custer raise in the same manner this year by the county levy. Here it is:

### In Custer County.

In reply to your request I submit to you area and amounts raised by the 1909 levy, figured on the basis of the assessed valuation of said territory:

	Area	Am't.
Higgins, N. E. Qr.	516	\$ 8,924.03
Sheldon, S. E. Qr.	576	13,153.16
Alfalfa, S. W. Qr.	770	13,368.58
Custer, N. W. Qr.	730	14,391.54
Jas. Pigman, County Clerk.		

Thus it will be seen that it costs the tax payers of the various quarters of Custer county from a little less than \$3000 to a little more than \$14000 as their contribution toward the expenses of Custer county. The other counties of the state, which come in this class, cost from \$19,000 up. Many of them are above \$50,000 and some of them go above \$100,000. We challenge Mr. R. E. Brega who is doing the writing for the division papers to disprove these figures. We challenge him to show in any single instance where the county of our class in the broad state of Nebraska is run anywhere near as cheaply as Custer county is. This is an argument against division which cannot be met.

### THE REAL CONDITION.

The question is constantly asked, "Do you think Custer county is going to divide this year?" We believe the people should know the situation as it actually is. A majority of the people of Custer county are to-day and always have been against division, because it is a well known and well established fact that the division of the county means greatly increased taxes. This, however, does not guarantee that the county could not divide. The question of division this fall hinges largely on the vote getting out. The proposed county seat towns of Callaway, Ansley and Sargent, have raised the largest campaign fund ever thrown into a division campaign and are doing the greatest amount of work that has ever been done for division. If you are opposed to division and want to see Custer county remain as it is the sure way of defeating division is to get out and vote and see that your neighbor goes to the polls. You may be busy, but you can better afford to spend a little time in going to the polls and casting your ballot than you can to pay increased taxes on your property for the balance of your life. Again we say that there are votes enough in Custer county opposed to division to defeat the question, but the outcome hinges on the anti-divisionists waking up and getting out a full vote. Arrange to go to the polls and see that your neighbor goes. Don't stay in your corn field and think that division will be defeated any way, your vote may be needed and needed badly. Go to the polls and vote against division.

### HOW DOES IT LOOK.

Here is something for the voters of the proposed new counties of Higgins and Sheldon counties to think about.

### HIGGINS AND VALLEY.

Higgins county pays as its share of the county taxes of Custer county this year \$8,924.03.

Valley county pays in county taxes this year \$19,156.55.

That's what the levy based on the assessed valuation actually raises Higgins county is smaller than Valley. Don't it look like the taxes would have to be double if Higgins was set off in a county by itself?

### SHELDON AND SHERMAN.

Now look at the difference between the proposed new county of Sheldon and the old county of Sherman both exactly the same size.

Sheldon county pays its share of the county taxes of Custer this year \$13,153.16.

Sherman county pays in county taxes this year \$32,031.91.

These figures cannot be disputed. How do they look to you?

## Good Advice From A Huxley Farmer.

Opposes Division, Not Because he Loves Broken Bow, but Because It's to his Interest.

### SOME SOUND ARGUMENT

The annual county division agitation is now on. As usual the divisionists seem to consider Broken Bow as the opposing chieftain and the batteries of Callaway, Ansley and Sargent have been trained accordingly. Any protest seems to be considered as an imposition by the agitators and is usually met with a "none of your business," or a "what allegiance do you owe Broken Bow?" If the above named towns were the only sections of the county that would be affected by the final outcome, it might be well to remain silent, as custom and Callaway seems to demand.

The contending towns would all have you believe that they have the interests of the farmer at heart, in fact that they would promote his interest prior to their own. However a careful perusal of division literature and a little reflection on the matter as a whole, will convince you that this cannot be true.

Broken Bow wishes to retain the solidity of the county for the same reason, that the respective prospective county seats want to chop it up. Other than as a means to the end in view, I venture to say that the real supporters of the county and the promoters of her wealth are forgotten. The farmers and property owners are the lads upon whom the county is largely dependent, and it is they who must foot the bill whether it be large or small.

It is with these hard hand sons of toil that I would speak.

Old Custer is our county just as much as it is Broken Bow's or Callaway's and we certainly have the same right to a voice in her disposition or retention.

In the first place, figures and reason tell us that four counties, with three new court houses, with the necessary transcribing of records, and four sets of records, and four sets of officers cannot be maintained as cheaply as one. If you don't believe this, investigate, and think a little for yourself; neither will hurt you and are not nearly as dangerous as Dick Brega would have you believe.

If we already have a court house "ring," and the county officers are contaminated with graft, there's a remedy. The primaries and polls are open to all voters, and my faith will not permit me to believe that honest and competent men are merely nominal.

Broken Bow isn't the whole cheese and can't elect a man without a few rural votes. Dividing the county is no remedy, it would simply entice graft by making room for three more rings in three new court houses.

As I glance over the history of Custer county, I am reminded that on many occasions she has figured prominently in the affairs of the state, and that when she has spoken her sister counties have paused to listen. Now is it to the interest of any good unbiased citizen to vote away this prestige, by whacking the county up into four dinky zigzag sections shaped by some designing individual to suit his own convenience and the interests of the town he represents?

The main argument for division that is the main argument made public, seems to be based upon the fact that farmers are put to a great inconvenience by living so far from the county seat. Actual business seldom takes the average farmer to the county seat more than once or twice a year, consequently there is very little complaint of inaccessibility by the unsophisticated themselves.

There is however in the rural districts as well as elsewhere, what might be termed floating population. To such I would say that if your interests are not seriously allied with either side of the question, why help in doing something that cannot be undone, and which may sometime prove a handicap to you? On the other hand if you should ever buy a vacant lot in Ansley, Callaway or Sargent you will still have the opportunity of voting for division.

The statement has sometimes been made that big counties were out of style, and that if they were a good thing, there would be more of them. True there are many successful small counties in the state, but their interests and conditions are different from ours. There is less waste land and their acres are capable of greater utilization and have a greater cash valuation. A few counties bordering Custer and with similar conditions are endeavoring to be in style, but their bonds and excessive

taxes are the most conspicuous earmarks of their progress.

Large counties can be made into smaller ones, but the little ones don't unite into big ones so easily.

No Mr. Divisionist we out here on the edges don't oppose division, because we love Broken Bow so much but because we love the interests of the county and the hard tolling producers more, and because we despise most the schemes promoting individual monopoly and attempting high finance to the detriment of the common public.

Victor E. Lowry,  
Huxley, Nebr.

### SOME COUNTY LEVIES.

When it comes to tax levies the voters of Custer county are invited to inspect the levies of Logan, Blaine and Loup counties, all of which adjoin the county of Custer. Custer county's levy is now seven mills. It has not been above 15 mills in the past thirteen years. The levy of Logan county has reached as high as 27 and three fourths mills. The levy of Loup county has run as high as 29 1/4 mills and the levy of Blaine county for nine years has run as high as 25 mills. Just inspect the statement which we publish below.

Year	Custer	Logan	Blaine	Loup
1898	15	22	25	23 25
1899	15	23 75	25	24 25
1900	14 50	22 75	25	24 50
1901	10	22	25	29 25
1902	13 50	22	25	29 25
1903	12	27 75	25	27 25
1904	8	23	25	26 25
1905	11	23	25	26 25
1906	11	15	25	26
1907	10	18	20	18
1908	7	17	15	15
1909	7	18	15	15
Avg. 1898-1904	14 4	25 25	25	24 25
Avg. 1905-1909	11 16	21 18	22 91	23 68

The average for all these years shows that Custer county's levy is from 10 to 12 mills lower than the average of the three counties named. If we paid this year 10 mills more than we are now paying, it would cost the tax payers of Custer county more than \$70,000 in addition to what they are now paying in county taxes. These figures are absolutely correct and we challenge Mr. Brega who writes practically all of the division matter, to prove them other wise.

### COUNTY BONDS.

The certified statement of the State Auditor showing the counties of Nebraska, which have been bonded brings out the fact that not a county in all Nebraska as small as the proposed new county of Higgins has escaped without bonds. When the divisionists tell us that the records can be transcribed, a new court house built and the tremendous expense of the new county met without increasing the taxes or voting bonds they are telling something that has never been done in the history of the entire state of Nebraska and never can be.

### THE COST OF DIVISION.

The divisionists would have you believe that about all that is necessary in starting a new county is to back a wagon up to the court house door, load in a few books and cart them to Ansley, Callaway and Sargent and start three new county seats. If you believe this please read the article entitled, "The Cost of Division," and you will soon see what a mistaken idea this is.

### THE DIFFERENCE.

The attention of the people of Custer county is called to the difference in the class of matter regarding county division, which is published by the division and the anti-division papers. The anti-division literature deals very largely with county levies, bonds and county expenses of Custer county and other counties of Nebraska, the cost of transcribing records in case of division and the salaries of County Officers both before and after division. The figures given are based on actual records and have stood the test for many weeks during a hot campaign.

The division press has kept away from actual records to a very great extent.

The newspaper campaign has been largely one in which the division papers have endeavored to prejudice the voters against Broken Bow and Broken Bow people, evidently trying by the cry of "graft" and "ring" to divert the attention of the voters from the real issue of county expense to that of prejudice and spite. What the people of Custer county want to know is what division is going to cost them and if they will be better off when they pay their taxes in the small county than they are now in the large one.

The voters not influenced by the county seat proposition and who look at the question from an unprejudiced standpoint have noted these facts.

# Official Salaries.

## Salaries of Four Sets of County Officers Compared With One Set.

### Officials Under County Division Will Cost the Tax-payers \$11,562 More Than at Present.

The cost of running four small counties as compared with the cost of running one large one is a feature of county division that is surely an eye opener to the uninitiated. The division leaders have repeatedly made the assertion that our taxes will be less under county division, and that most of the county officers are paid by the fees of their office so that the expense will be the same whether it is one large county or four small ones. Notwithstanding columns and pages have been written telling of the beauties of county division, the division press steers pretty clear of actual figures regarding salaries of four sets of county officers.

It must be born in mind that the tax payers of Custer county as it is to-day are the same identical ones who will have to pay the taxes in four small counties, if division comes.

We have gone to great pains in obtaining a comparative statement as between the cost of one set of county officials and four sets. Our figures have been approved by competent authorities, after a most thorough investigation, and we say to our readers that they are correct and absolutely fair. The salaries given conform to the statutory provisions for small counties with populations such as our proposed new counties would have if divided.

**County Assessor:**—The County Assessor now gets \$700. Under division each assessor would get \$450.  
Four County Assessors at \$450 each.....\$ 1800  
Present salary of County Assessor.....700

Additional cost under county division.....\$ 1100

**County Superintendent:**—The present salary of the County Superintendent is \$1200 and he is allowed \$400 for clerk hire. In four small counties the salary would be \$800 and possibly \$1000 in each of two of the new counties.  
Four County Superintendents at \$800 each (clerks not included).....\$ 3200  
Present salary of Co. Supt. and clerk.....1600

Additional cost under county division.....\$ 1600

If office is kept open while superintendent is visiting schools, clerk hire should be added to additional cost.

**County Attorney:**—In Custer county as it is the County Attorney gets \$1000 Under division the statutory salary would be \$700.  
Four County Attorneys at \$700 each.....\$ 2800  
Present salary of County Attorney.....1000

Additional cost under county division.....\$ 1800

**Sheriff:**—Under the new law the sheriff turns all his fees in to the county and gets a stipulated salary. The salary of Custer County's sheriff under the new law is \$1750 and the deputy gets \$600.

In smaller counties such as we would have under division the board fixes the salary, the maximum being \$1200, and such deputy hire as they deem necessary regardless of the fees of the office. A conservative estimate would be \$1000 under county division for each sheriff.

Four Sheriffs at \$800 and four deputies at \$200.....\$ 4000  
Present salary of sheriff and deputy.....2410

Additional Cost under county division.....\$ 1590

### County Clerk, Clerk District Court and Register of Deeds.

If Custer county was divided into four counties the office of Register of Deeds would be abolished in all four counties, and the County Clerk would perform the duties of Register. Likewise the office of Clerk of the District Court would be abolished in two of the new counties and the County Clerk would also be Clerk of the District Court in these two counties.

The four County Clerks would each draw a salary of \$1500, provided the fees reached that amount. Their four deputies would get \$700 each, provided the fees are sufficient. The total clerk hire of the County Clerk, Clerk of the District Court and Register of Deeds last year was about \$2300. We will cut out the clerk hire for all four counties. The Clerk of the District for the two counties would be entitled to \$3200. Thus we get the following summary:

Four County Clerks at \$1500 each.....\$ 6000  
Four Deputies at \$700 each.....2800  
Two Clerks of the District Court.....3200  
Total.....\$12000

Total salaries for offices of County Clerk, Clerk of District Court and Register of Deeds in Custer county for 1908 was.....\$ 8900  
Additional cost under county division.....\$ 3100

Last year the three offices named turned over excess fees to the amount of \$2683, but under county division this amount would be eaten up in salaries.

**County Treasurer:**—The County Treasurer gets \$3000, if his fees reach that amount and he is paid by a commission on collections. He gets ten per cent on the first \$5000, four per cent on the next \$1000 and two per cent on the balance. Thus it will be seen that under county division four treasurers would get ten per cent on four times \$5000 and so on making a very much higher commission on the same amount of collections than one. The collections in the treasurer's office for 1908 ran \$255,580. Here is an accurate comparison; based on the last year's business of the treasurer's office.

Salaries of four treasurers at \$1542 each, based on 1908 collections (no allowance made for deputies or clerks).....\$ 6170  
Total salaries of treasurer, deputy and clerks in treasurer's office 1908.....4100

Excess fees turned back to county.....3070

Additional cost under county division.....2872

This doesn't allow the County Treasurer under division a deputy or a clerk. He would have to do all the work or pay a clerk himself.

### GRAND SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL EXPENSE.

Additional expense of County Assessor under county division.....\$ 1100  
Additional expense of County Superintendent under county division.....1600  
Additional expense of County Attorney under county division.....1800  
Additional expense of County Sheriff under county division.....1590  
Additional expense of County Clerk, Clerk of the District Court and Register of Deeds under county division.....3100  
Additional expense of County Treasurer under county division.....2872

Total additional expense under division.....\$11,562

The above does not provide for salaries of deputy treasurers, or clerks for any of the officers in the new counties.

Over \$11,000 additional each year to maintain the various offices of Custer county is a mighty big sum in addition to what they are now costing. But this is not all. We have not said a word about lights, fuel, janitors and repairs. We have not included the salary of four sets of supervisors. We have not included four district courts with its four juries—96 jurors at \$2 per day in four counties, instead of 24 jurors in one county. We have not included the maintaining of four jails, four poor farms, four boards of insanity, four boards of health, four county physicians, four old soldiers commissions or four teachers institutes. We have found exact figures for over \$11,000 additional expense and we believe these "other things" will swell the sum to \$15,000. If the people of Custer county were asked to vote a bond of \$15,000 each year, this bond to run fifteen or twenty years, they would turn it down as promptly and emphatically as they have done in years gone by, and yet many an advocate of division does not stop to think that dividing Custer county means probably \$15,000, to be paid not, in fifteen or twenty years, but every year.